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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to handle the shortage of registered nurses (RN's), many institutions have designed articulation programs to move licensed practical nurses (LPN's) into RN programs. Research describes LPN's as nontraditional adult learners with family responsibilities who must work full-time while in school. Many are anxious about returning to the classroom. With these considerations in mind, some scholars in the field recommend that LPN-to-RN transition programs be separate from the second year of the RN program and that they be constituted to reflect the specific needs of adult learners. For example, these programs should be convenient and cost-efficient for a working adult; be limited to a few days a week; include only LPN's; have individualized learning components; and provide all necessary student learning support. To investigate the feasibility of a LPN-to-RN transition program, Seminole Community College (SCC) in Florida utilized the services of a direct mail service to identify LPN's and a telemarketing firm to conduct telephone interviews. Using a random sample of 500, 251 LPN's were contacted. The survey found that: (1) 62.2% were over the age of 40; (2) 71.3% had been practicing for 10 years or more; (3) 33.5% were employed in a hospital; (4) 15.5% were employed in a doctor's office; (5) 51.2% worked 40 or more hours per week; (6) 51.8% had an interest in studying part-time to become an RN; (7) 46.5% preferred evening classes, 31.8% day classes, and 21.7% weekends; (8) 57.4% preferred a 1 year, 20-hour per week program; and (9) the biggest reasons for delaying RN education were time, inconvenient class times, and cost. The study report includes the survey instrument and detailed results. (KP)

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ED 375 891

The Feasibility of an Evening LPN to RN Transition Program

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Conducted for Seminole Community College Nursing Department

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The Feasibility of an Evening LPN to RN Transition Program

ANALYSIS

In an attempt to handle the shortage of registered nurses,many institutions have designed articulation programs to move LPN's into RN programs. The research accompanying the establishment of these programs has identified that LPN's most often resemble nontraditional adult learners who have family responsibilities and must work full time while going to school. While many would like to become RN's, cost and time considerations are restricting factors. In addition, like other nontraditional students, they have anxieties about returning to the classroom after many years of absence. With these considerations in mind, there are scholars in the field who are recommending that LPN to RN transition programs be separate from the second year of the RN programs and that they be constituted to reflect the specific needs of adult learners. They should be convenient and cost efficient for a working adult. They might include the following elements:

* be limited to a few days a week
* include only LPN's
* have individualized learning components
* provide all necessary student learning support

The data from the SCC survey of LPN's in its service area also pointed out the adult learner nature of its respondents. Convenience of courses and program cost were the major considerations, followed by a less intimidating classroom setting. The majority of respondents preferred:

* an evening program
* limited to one year
* with 20 hours of classroom per week

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Seminole Community College presently has both an LPN and an Associate Degree RN program. The college also maintains a transition option which allows LPN's to move into the second year of the RN program by means of a transition course combined with the fulfilling of the required general education course work. After completing the transition, the LPN's are integrated along with the second year RN's into the day program.

During the past several years there have been numerous inquiries about a nursing education evening tract at SCC for LPN's wanting to become RN's. The motivation comes from experienced LPN's who have worked to establish themselves in career positions and then must resign or become part time in order to attend the day time RN program at the college. These experienced LPN's often bring to the nursing program a strong foundation of clinical skills and would be an excellent population to target for an evening nursing program.

Maureen Daniels of the nursing faculty proposed a project, funded by a Staff and Program Development grant, to the Institutional Analysis and Research Department of SCC involving the determination of the interest of LPN's in the college's service area relative to an evening LPN to RN program tract. This study results from that survey effort.

SETTING THE SCENE

Transition Programs

The American Association of Community Colleges (1991) noted that there was a continuing shortage of associate degree registered nurses and advocated that community colleges initiate an aggressive recruitment and retention program targeting licensed practical nurses. The National League of Nursing's own studies (1990) support the recruitment of future RN's from present LPN's.

> *...of the total associate degree graduates surveyed, 41% practiced as practical/vocational nurses prior to obtaining licensure.(p.1)*

Hosch (1986) in an extensive study of LPN to RN program options, found four basic patterns

1. *Licensure Based Programs: These are programs which admits LPNs and are designed to build on their prior level of nursing education. These programs may limit admissions to only LPNs.*
2. *Advanced Placement Programs: These are programs which have curriculum that allow for students with previous schooling to receive advanced standing within their program. This advanced standing may be granted by providing for transfer of previously earned educational credit to college credit by acknowledging this previous*

education or by requiring the individual to satisfactorily complete theory and/or clinical proficiency examinations.

3. *Multiple Entry-Exit Programs: These are programs in which the curriculum permits students to prepare for entrance into or exit from different phases of the nursing program. For example, the student may enter into a two-year academic program for registered nursing and may exit after one year and be eligible for licensure as a LPN or after the second year and be eligible for licensure as a registered nurse; sometimes referred to as career ladder programs.*

4. *Assessment Programs: These are programs in which the curriculum is based totally on an assessment of the individual's knowledge and competency through the administration of theory and clinical proficiency examinations. (p. 17)*

The AACC in cooperation with the Metropolitan Life Foundation(1990) funded 19 community college projects aimed at coping with the registered nursing shortage.

Some of these schools had proposals that dealt specifically with a LPN to RN transition program. Umpqua Community College designed a 44 hour summer bridge course to help LPN's move into the existing second year of their associate degree registered nursing program.

New Mexico Junior College modified their existing sophomore curriculum to an accelerated 10 months program with a self-paced modular transition course. North Harris County College also established a modified second year with an individualized curriculum for the LPN to RN transition.

The LPN Profile

Louisiana State University (1991) conducted a feasibility study of the likelihood of success for an LPN to RN articulation program. As part of the study, they conducted a survey of LPN's in surrounding parishes (counties). They found that most LPN's

* had been practicing for 10 or more years
* were employed full time
* had an interest in studying to become an RN on a part time basis
* would continue to work full time while going to school

Hosch(1986) found based on his analysis of LPN's in West Virginia that those returning to school were likely

* less likely to have as many completed general college courses as those enrolled in the RN program
* more likely to be older students
* have family responsibilities
* will have financial difficulties upon returning to school

Existing data, then point to the fact that LPN's returning to school for RN programs are more similar to nontraditional, adult learners than to full time college credit students.

Perlich(1989) found that LPN's , like other adult learners, had to integrate the student role in with the rest of his/her life. In addition there are the accompanying problems of the adult learner returning to the classroom after years of absence.

Given the adult learner profile of returning LPN's, Williams and Gallimore (1987) suggest that ADN programs be developed specifically for the returning LPN students. They indicate that separate RN tract programs for LPN's have already been established in institutions in New York state and at Rose State University in Oklahoma.

METHODOLOGY

Institutional Analysis and Research in cooperation with the Seminole Community College Nursing Education Department constructed a survey instrument that was given to a randomly selected group of Licensed Practical Nurses living in the college's service area of Seminole County.

What makes this study particularly noteworthy beyond the results is its utilization of the services of other agencies in the completion of the work (out servicing). This cooperative effort had the effect of collapsing the times involved, improving the return rate, and producing more viable results. More specifically, a direct mail service, Sunrise Marketing Services, Inc.,obtained for the college a tape of all practical nurses living in Seminole county from the State Department of Professional Regulation. The service then reviewed the currency of the phone numbers and addresses, drew a random sampling of 500 potential respondents from the tape total of 1097, and then printed/sent out letters to each of selected LPN's. The letters were based on input from Institutional Research and the Nursing Education Department and indicated to the potential respondents that he/she would be receiving a call requesting survey information that would help in curriculum design for the Nursing Program. (Appendix A contains a copy of the letter.)

Approximately one week after the letters were mailed, a telemarketing firm, Marketel Inc. began to contact those who had received the mailing. Marketel was successful at conducting a phone interview , using the survey instrument with 251 out of the 500, resulting in a response rate of 50%. (Appendix B contains a breakout of the Marketel Phone Success.) Institutional Analysis and Research tabulated the data, including the close coding of open ended responses, analyzed the results, and wrote the report.

Address/phone verification, mailing, phone interviewing, and data production took approximately one month. The relatively short survey administration period and the 50% return rate based on a single contact testify to the value of a cooperative outservicing technique in the gathering of institutional research data.

Sample Composition

There were 251 practical nurses in the sample interviewed and they had the following profile:

* Most were over age 40 (62.2%) This is consistent with the total population of LPN's in the county of whom 61.5% are 40 or older.

* The majority had been LPN's for 10 or more years (71.3%)

* Most are either employed in a hospital (33.5%) or a doctor's office (15.5%)

* The majority work 40 or more hours per week (51.2%)

* Most start their work day in the morning (59.5%)

* A majority were interested in becoming an RN (51.8%)

RESULTS

Appendix C contains the survey instrument and script used by interviewers. Appendix D contains the detailed responses.

Question 1 How many years have you been an LPN?

Over 71 percent of the respondents have been an LPN 10 or more years.

Question 2 In what area of work are you presently employed?

Hospital employment was most reported. Over 1/3 of the respondents indicated a hospital as area of employment.

Question 3 How many hours do you normally work per week?

More than half (50.2%) of the respondents reported normally working more than 40 hours a week.

Question 4 What is your normal starting time (work schedule)?

Morning (anytime from 6:00 a.m. to 11.59 a.m) was the most reported as normal work starting time. Almost 60 % of the respondents reported a morning starting time.

Question 5 Are you interested in becoming an RN?

About 52% reported an interest in becoming an RN.

Question 6 Since you've become an LPN, how long have you been interested in becoming an RN?

Of those reporting an interest in becoming an RN, most (46.2%) LPNs reported being interested for at least 10 years since they became an LPN.

Question 7 What is your primary reason for seeking education leading to RN status?

Career advancement was stated as the primary reason for seeking education leading to RN status.

Question 8 What has been the biggest cause for delaying your RN education?

The biggest cause for delaying the RN education was about evenly divided between not enough time, class times inconvenient, and the cost, respectively.

Question 9 What time schedule would enable you to attend RN classes?

Over 46.5 % preferred evenings. The next highest was 31.8 % who preferred days and 21.7 % weekends.

Question 10 What length of RN program do you prefer?

The majority (57.4%) preferred a one year program of approximately 20 hours of classroom per week.

Question 11 Have you sought alternatives to a traditional RN educational program such as correspondence courses or independent study?

Of those expressing an interest in becoming an RN, 57.4% have sought out alternatives to a traditional RN education program and 42.6% have not.

Question 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16 If you did seek an alternative RN educational program, did the following attract you to alternative RN education? cost, convenient times,method of instruction, less intimidating approach, or other reasons.

For those who chose an alternative RN educational program
90.5% listed convenient time
75.7% listed the cost
51.4% listed a less intimidating approach

The majority (71.6%) indicated there were no other reasons, but those who did list other reasons primarily indicated convenience of being able to study at home and the fact that the program was readily available with no waiting. Detailed "other reasons" are listed in Appendix E.

Question 17 How old are you?

Over 62% of the respondents were over 40 years old, and this generally reflects the total LPN population of Seminole County.

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APPENDIX A

MAILING

SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
100 Weldon Boulevard Sanford, Florida 32773-6199 (407)328-4722 or 843-7001

Dear

In an effort to better meet the needs of future students in our nursing programs, Seminole Community College is conducting a survey of a select number of Licensed Practical Nurses in Seminole County. We strongly encourage your participation in this survey as it will enable us to plan programs that reflect the changing needs of our community.

Using a special sampling procedure, we have selected a small number of LPNs in the county. Because you were among the limited number sampled it is important that you assist us if at all possible.

Enclosed please find a copy of the Licensed Practical Nurse Survey. Within the next few days a representative from SCC will contact you by phone to determine your willingness to participate and, if so, to interview you using the enclosed survey. We anticipate that the interview will take no longer than 10 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in this very important activity. Using the input from this survey, we will be able to make more informed decisions regarding the development of our nursing programs. Your assistance helps us continue in our goal to provide the finest education for the nurses in our community.

Sincerely,

Laura Aromando, MSN, RN
Department Chair
Nursing Programs

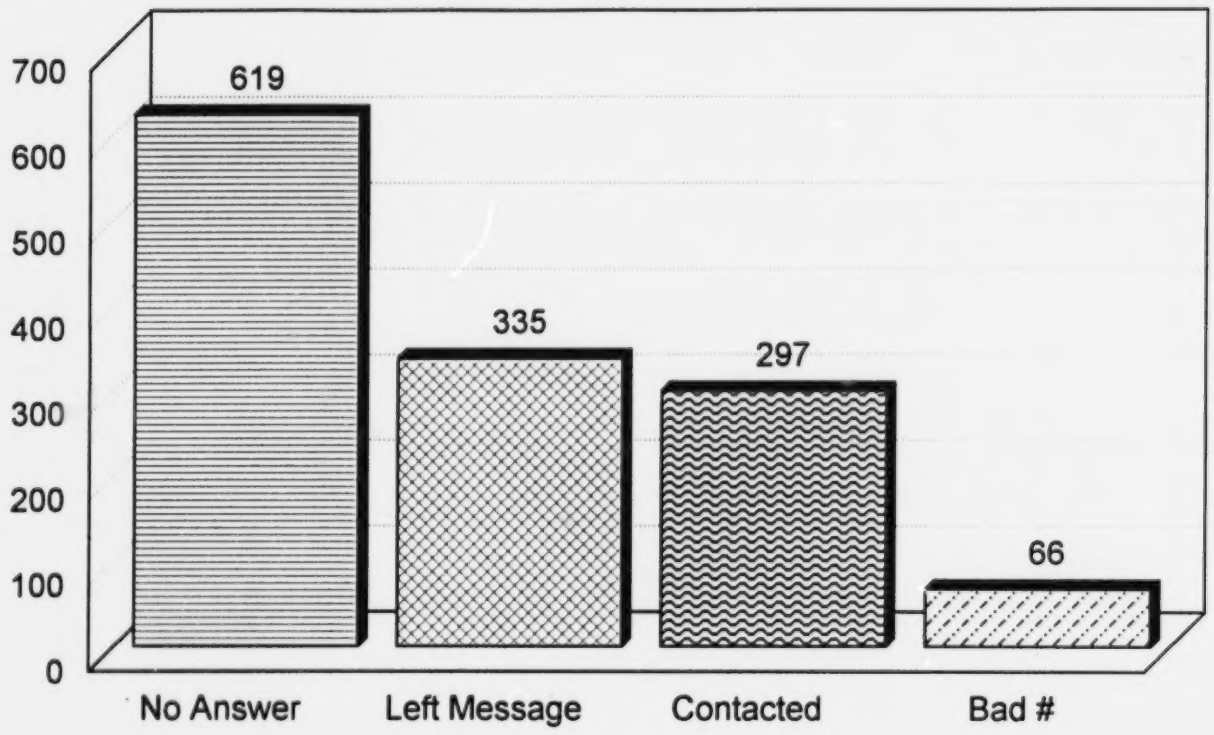
An Equal Access · Equal Opportunity Community College

APPENDIX B

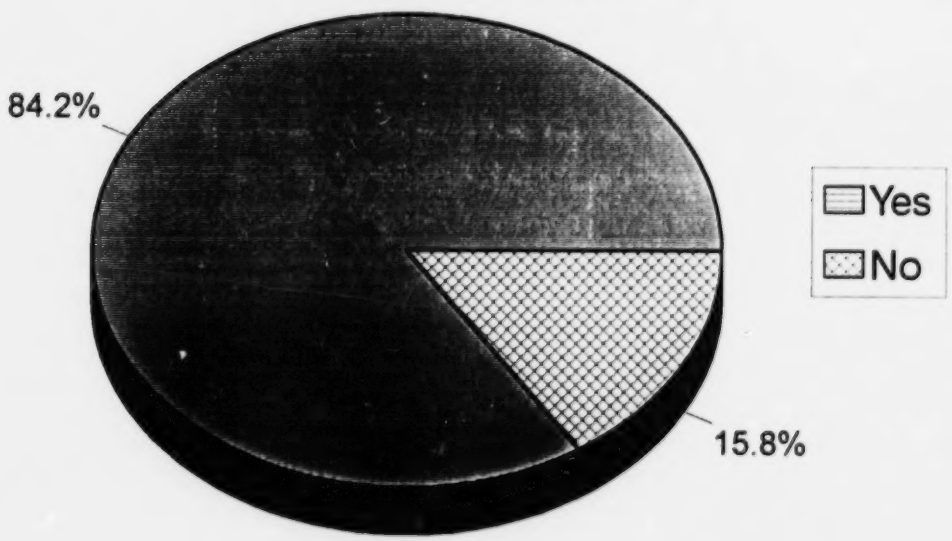
MARKETEL PHONE ANALYSIS

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

Total Call Volume



Contacted Call Results



Marketel Incorporated 7006 Stapoint Ct. Suite E Winter Park, FL 32792

APPENDIX C

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
LPN SURVEY INTRODUCTION

7/25/94

Hello may I please speak with (LIST NAME)?

MESSAGE TO A PERSON or MACHINE:

Hello, I'm calling on behalf of SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. We're conducting an important survey of specially selected NURSES in this area. We will be calling back soon to ask for just a few minutes of your time to provide valuable input on topics important to our community. Thank you. (or to person: When would be the best time to reach LIST NAME?) [record]

PRESENTATION TO (LIST NAME):

Hello, My name is (your First Name) and I'm calling on behalf of SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE. We are conducting an important survey of NURSES in this area. As an LPN, you have been especially selected to participate and your responses will help us to determine educational and training needs of NURSES in our community. We recently sent you a copy of this survey in the mail, do you recall receiving it?
{If they say they did it and mailed it in, do the phone survey anyway}
It will be a great help if you would give us just 10 minutes to provide your input. Do you have a few minutes right now to answer just a few questions?
{IF NO, GET THE BEST TIME TO CALL BACK & RECORD IT}
{IF THEY WON'T PARTICIPATE THANK THEM AND MOVE ON QUICKLY}

PROCEDURES

1. RECORD ALL RESPONSES ON ANSWER SHEET WITH A #2 LEAD PENCIL
2. WRITE ASSIGNED I.D. # AND BUBBLE IN ON ANSWER SHEET
3. WRITE RESPONSES GIVEN AS "OTHER" (questions 2,7,8,10,16) BETWEEN PRINTED LINES IN 2nd BLOCK ON ANSWER SHEET {ACCURATELY SUMMARIZE ALL APPROPRIATE RESPONSES}

AFTER COMPLETEING THE SUPVEY:

Thank you very much for your input. SCC has a very successful 12 month LPN to ADN transition track program with both Day and Evening classes. If you would like more information on enhancing your career or have any questions at all, please call the college at 238-2014. Thank you so much.

LICENSED PRACTICAL NURSE SURVEY, JULY 1994
SEMINOLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

1. How many years have you been an LPN?

   A. Less than 2 years
   B. 2 - 5 years
   C. 6 - 9 years
   D. 10 or more years

2. In what area of work are you presently employed? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Hospital
   B. Doctor's office
   C. Clinic
   D. Home services
   E. Nursing home
   F. Other

3. How many hours do you normally work per week? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Less than 20 hours per week
   B. 20 - almost 30 hours per week
   C. 30 - almost 40 hours per week
   D. 40 - almost 50 hours per week
   E. 50 or more hours per week

4. What is your normal work starting time (work schedule)? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Early morning (anytime from 12:01 a.m. to 5:59 a.m.)
   B. Mornings (anytime from 6:00 a.m. to 11:59 a.m.)
   C. Afternoons (anytime from 12:00 noon to 5:59 p.m.)
   D. Evenings (anytime from 6:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight)

5. Are you interested in becoming an RN?

   A. Yes B. NO

   If you answered "yes", to question 5, please continue with question 6. If you answered "no", please go to question 17.

6. Since you've become an LPN, how long have you been interested in becoming an RN?

   A. Less than 2 years
   B. 2 - 5 years
   C. 6 - 9 years
   D. 10 or more years

7. What is your primary reason for seeking education leading to RN status? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Career advancement
   B. Additional income
   C. Increased knowledge
   D. Other _____

8. What has been the biggest cause for delaying your RN education? (Select one best answer.)

   A. The cost
   B. Not enough personal time
   C. The time classes are offered is not convenient
   D. Worry about classes
   E. Does not apply. I am currently studying for RN
   F. Other_____

9. What time schedule would enable you to attend RN classes? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Days (7:00 a.m. to 4:59 p.m.)
   B. Evenings (5:00 p.m. to 9:59 p.m.)
   C. Weekends (5:00 p.m. Friday til 6:00 p.m. Sunday)

10. What length of RN program do you prefer? (Select one best answer.)

   A. Approximately 20 hours of classroom per week for 1 year
   B. Approximately 15 hours of classroom per week for 1 1/2 years
   C. Approximately 10 hours of classroom per week for 2 years
   D. Other _____

11. Have you sought out alternatives to a traditional RN educational program such as correspondence courses or independent study?

   A. Yes
   B. No (If no answered "No go to question 17.)

12. The cost?

A. Yes B. No

13. The convenient times isntruction was offered?

A. Yes B. No

14. The method of instruction?

A. Yes B. No

15. Less intimidating approach and more "user friendly?"

A. Yes B. No

16. Other reasons?

A. Yes (Please list)_____
B. No

17. How old are you?

A. Less than 20 years old
B. 20 - 25 years old
C. 26 - 30 years old
D. 31 - 40 years old
E. 41 - or more years old

Thank you very much for your input. Your response to this survey will help us in planning future RN programs at Seminole Community College.

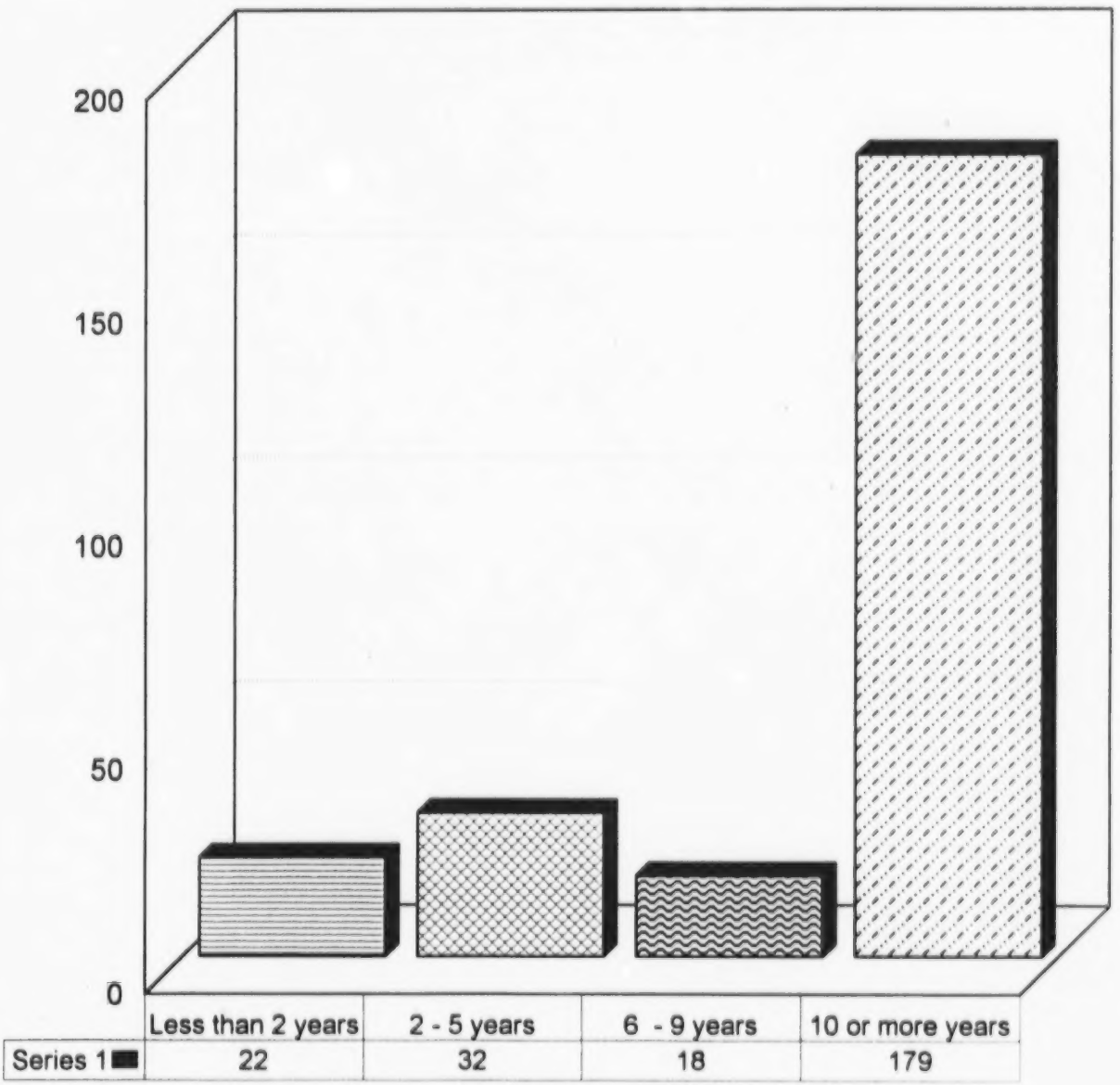
APPENDIX D

DETAILED RESULTS

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 1

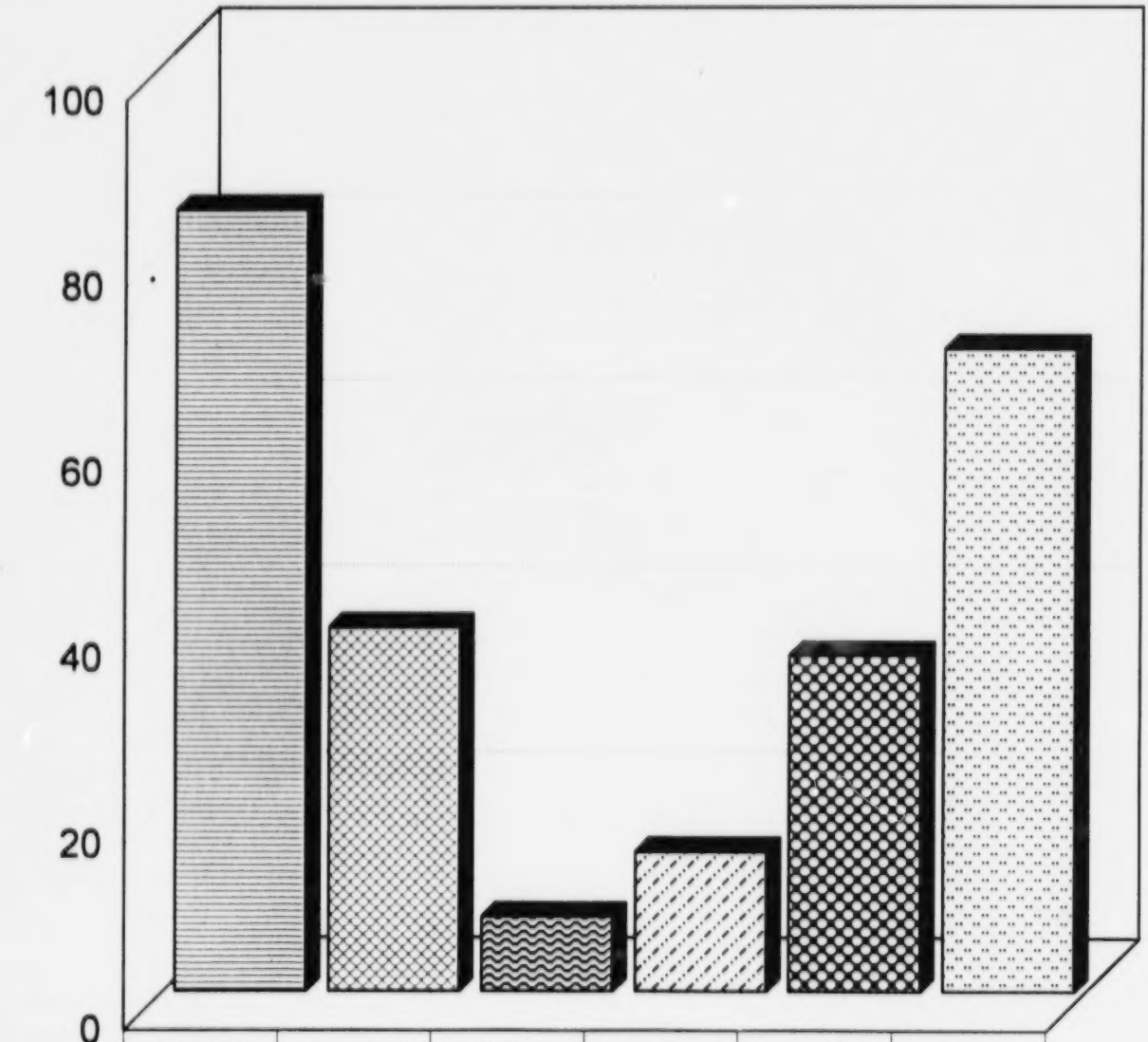
How many years have you been an LPN?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 2

In what area of work are you presently employed?

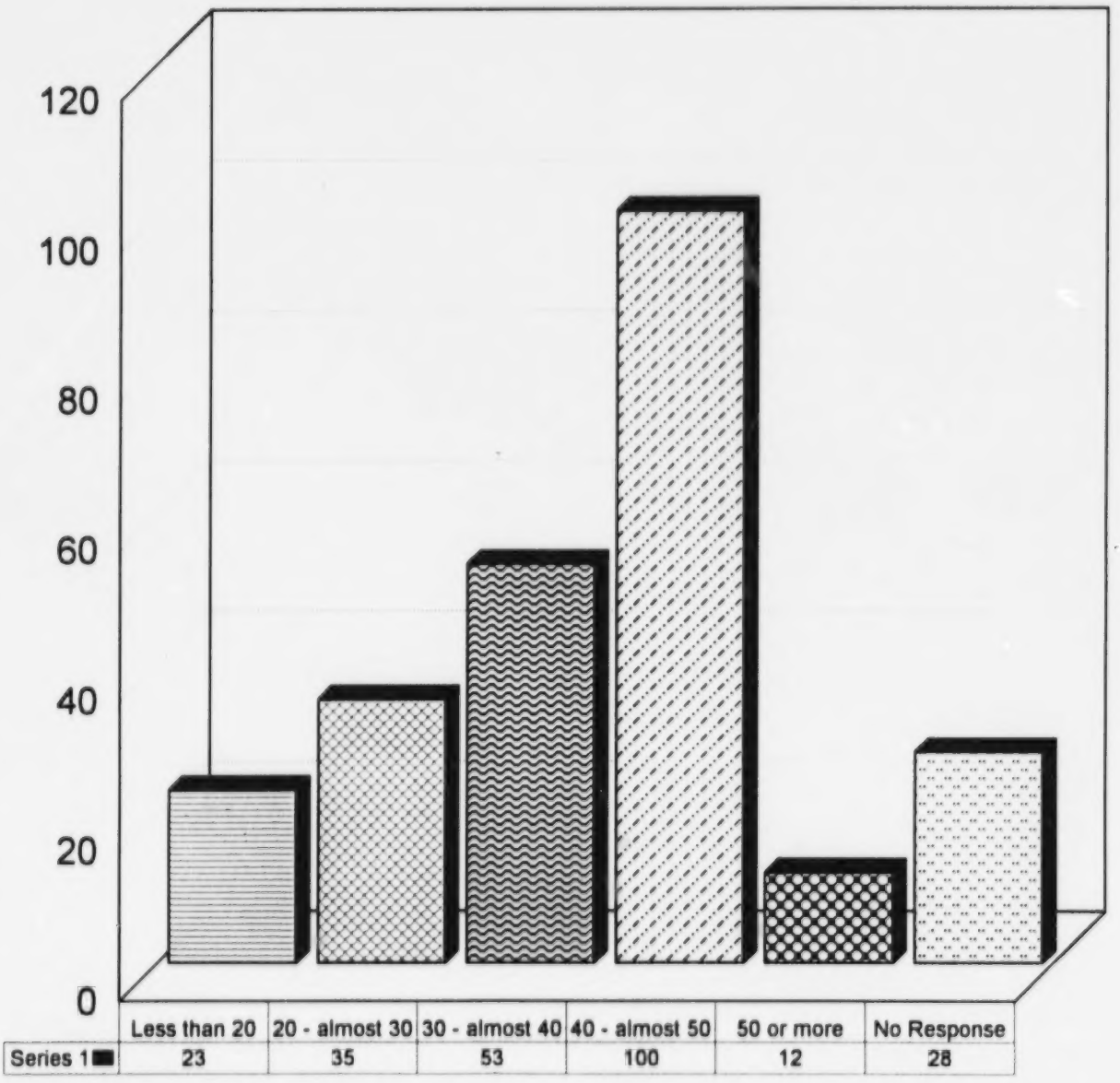


	Hospital	Doctors Off.	Clinic	Home Srvcs.	Nursing Home	Other
Series 1	84	39	8	15	36	69

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 3

How many hours do you normally work per week?

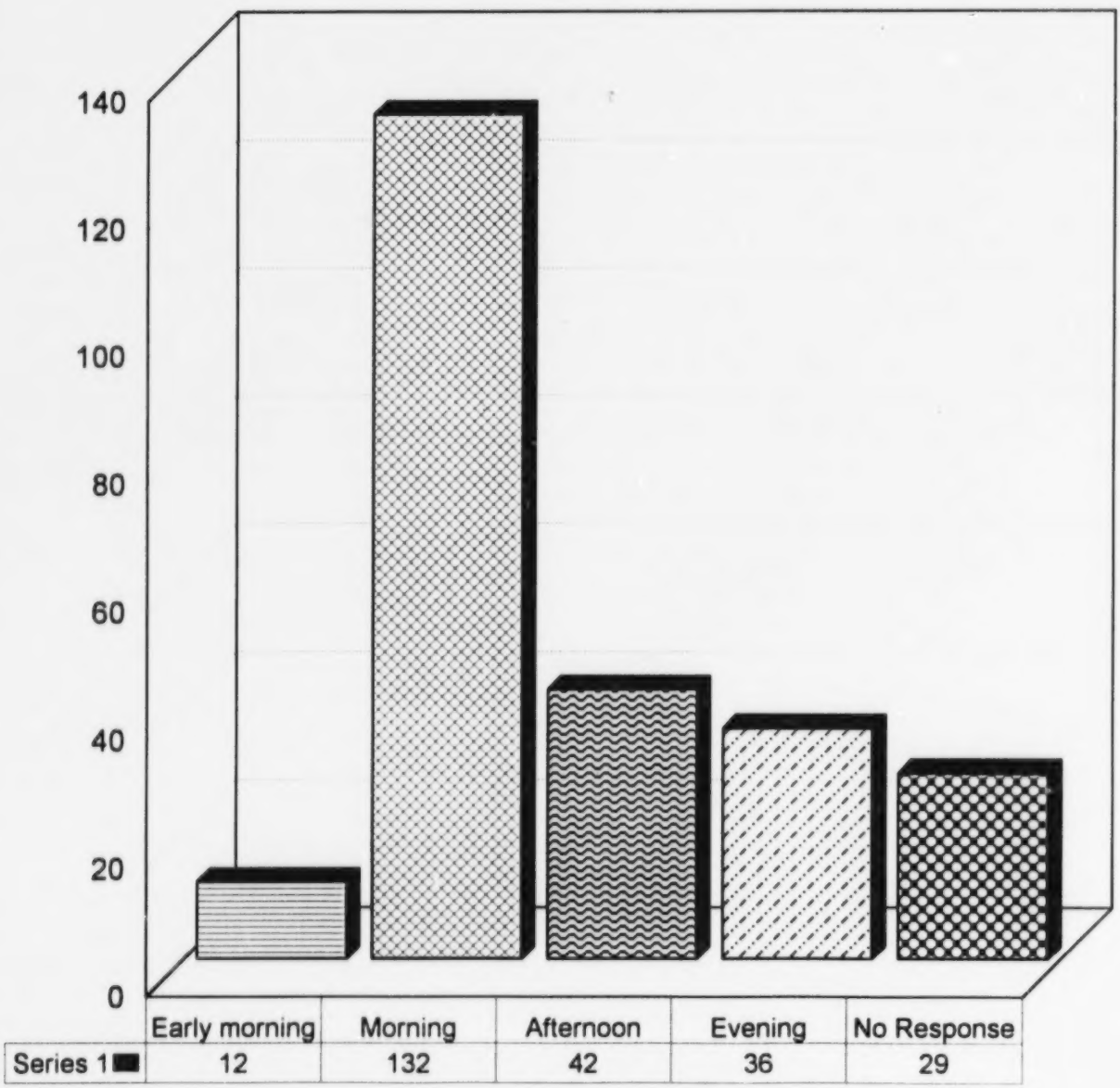


	Less than 20	20 - almost 30	30 - almost 40	40 - almost 50	50 or more	No Response
Series 1	23	35	53	100	12	28

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 4

What is your normal work starting time?

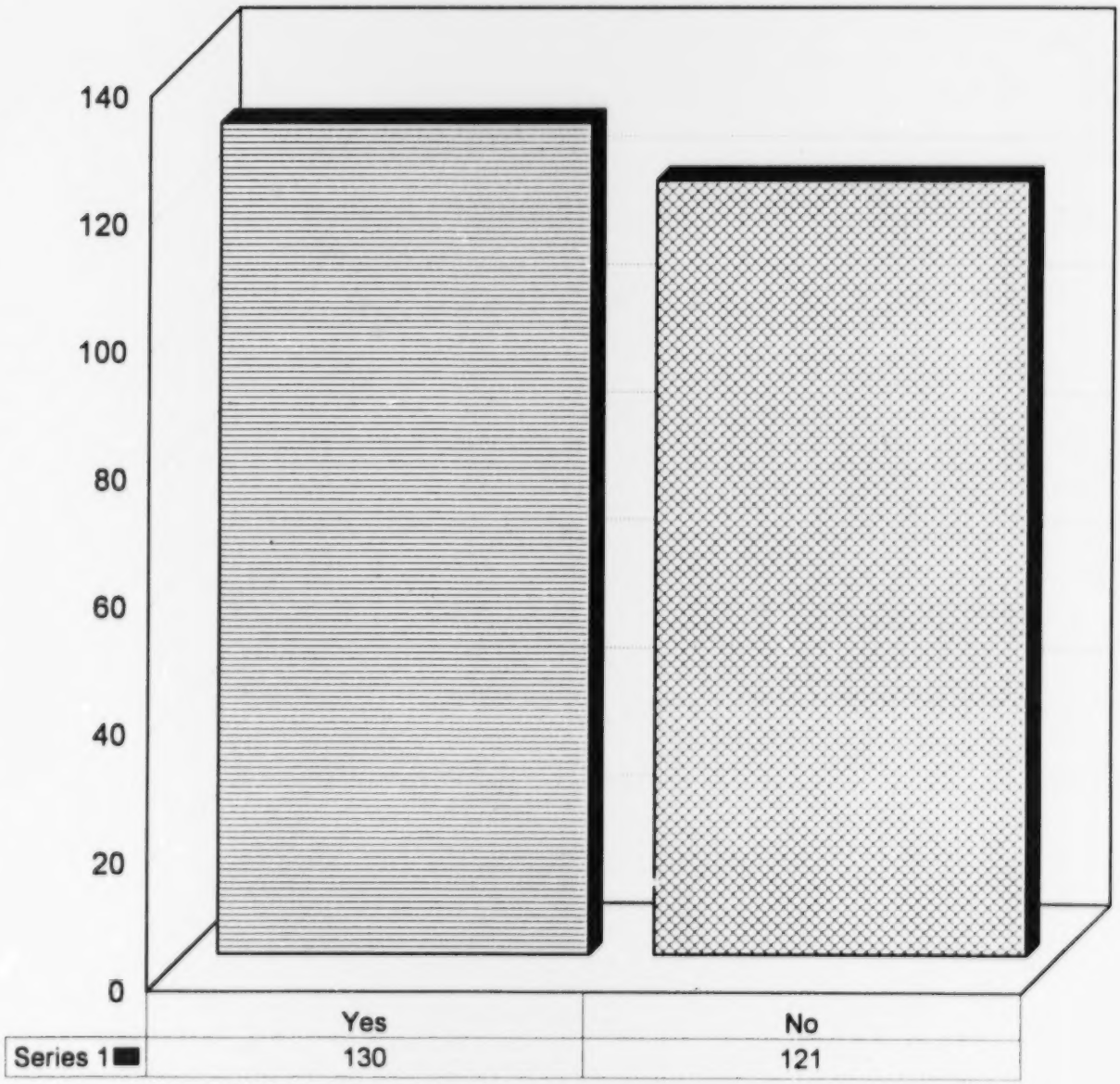


	Early morning	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	No Response
Series 1	12	132	42	36	29

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 5

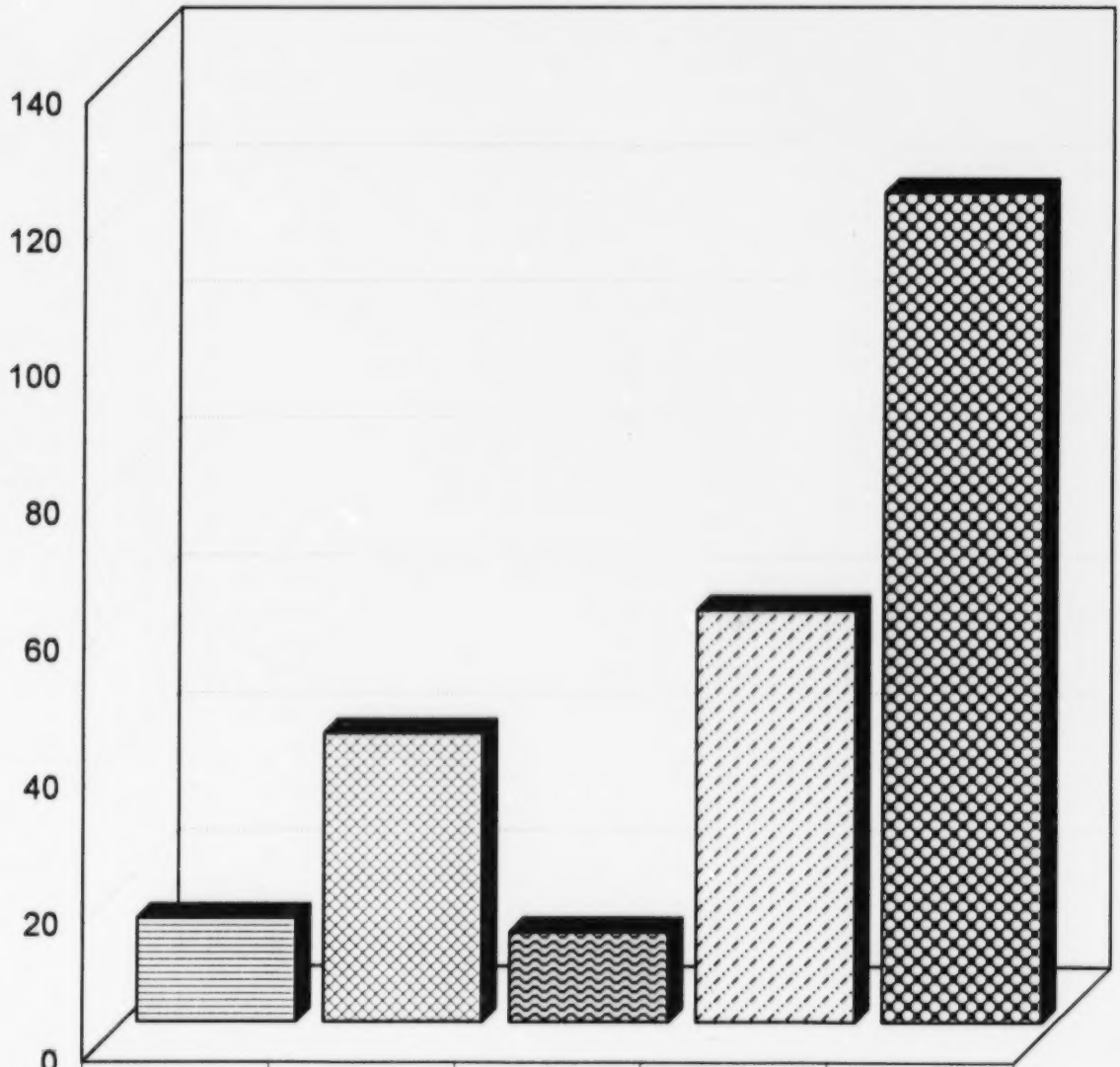
Are you interested in becoming an RN?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 6

Since you've become an LPN, how long have been interested in becoming an RN?

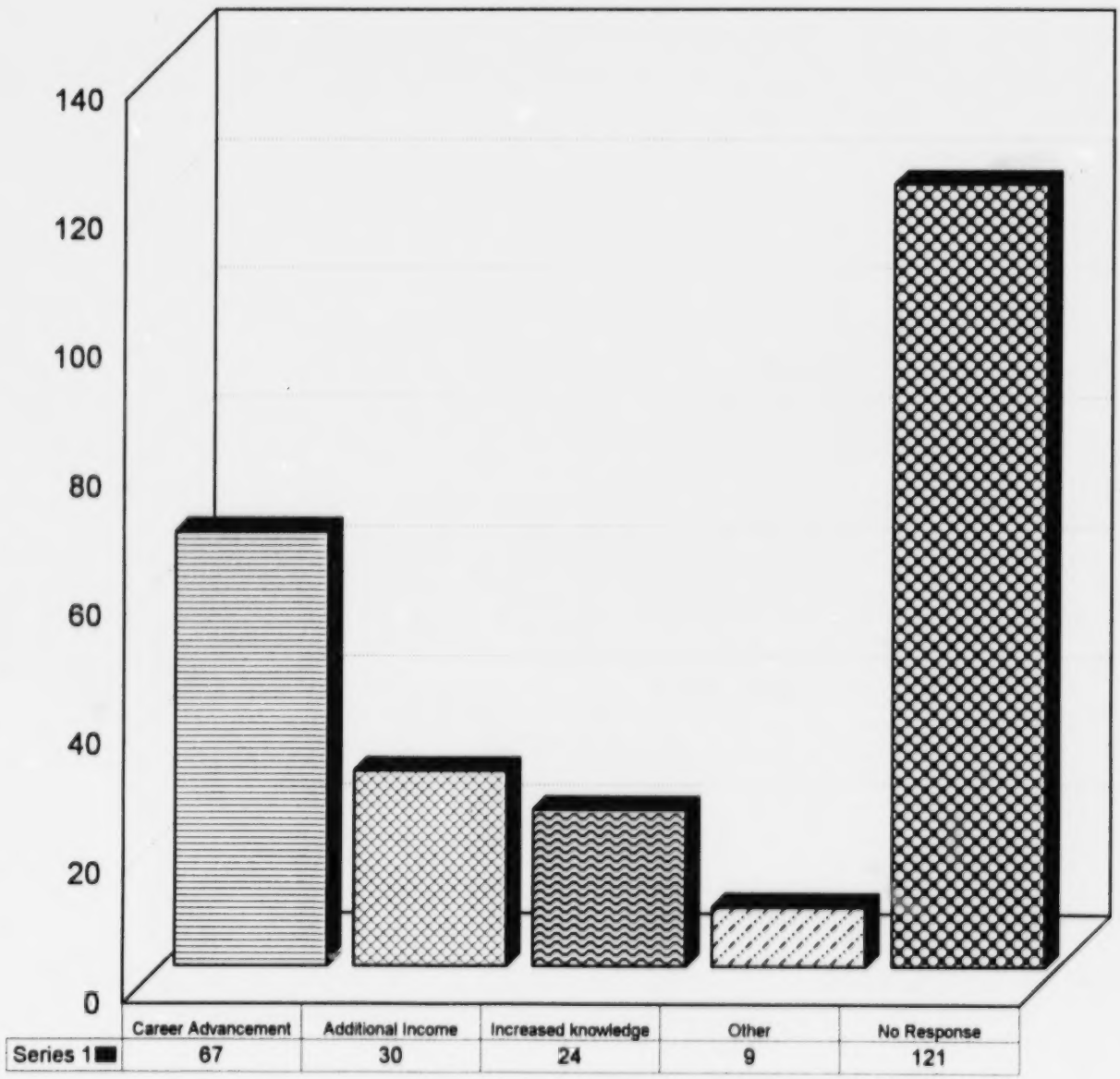


	Less than 2 yrs	2 - 5 years	6 - 9 years	10 or more yrs	No Response
Series 1	15	42	13	60	121

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 7

What is your primary reason for seeking education leading to RN status?

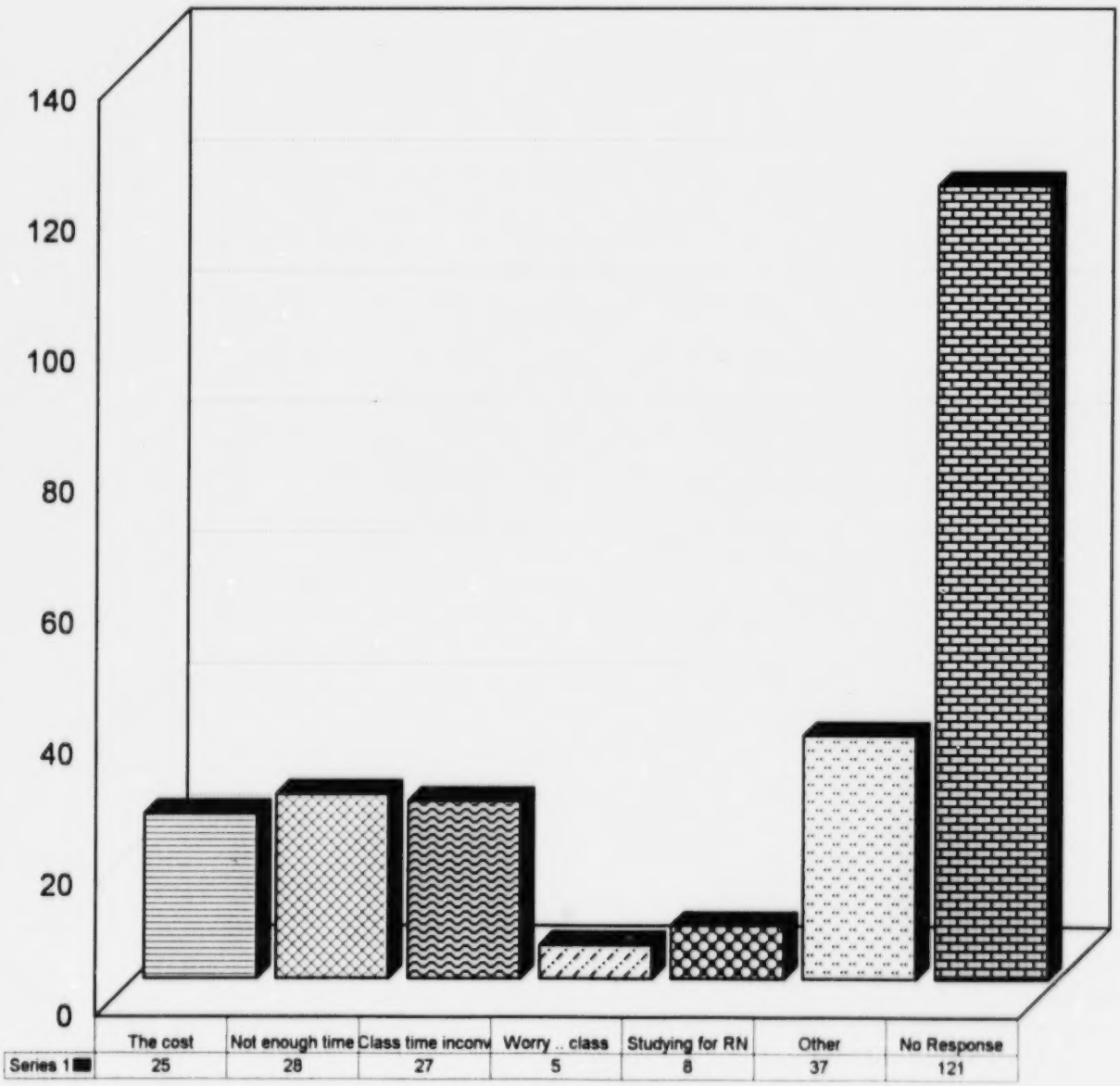


	Career Advancement	Additional Income	Increased knowledge	Other	No Response
Series 1	67	30	24	9	121

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 8

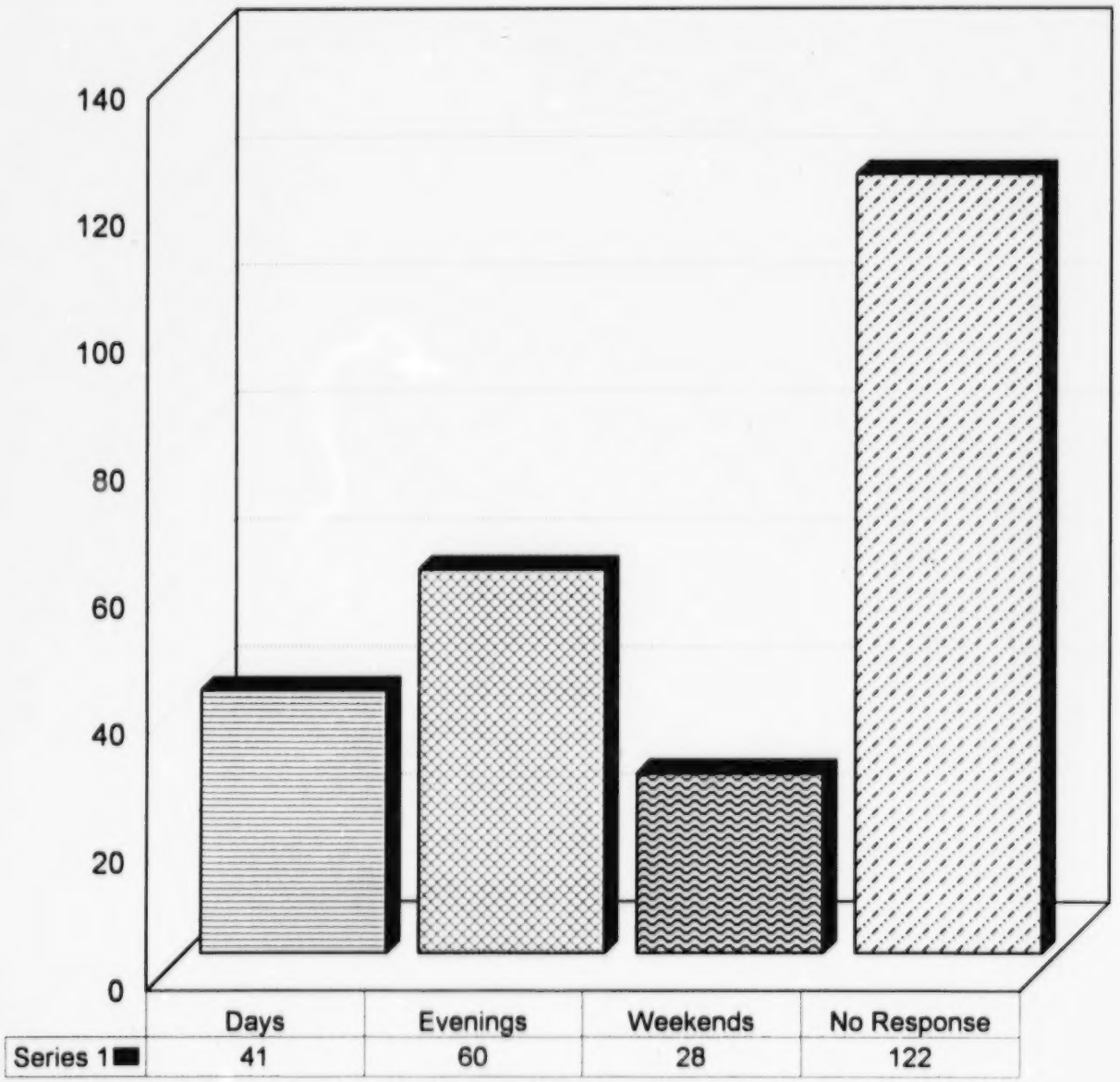
What has been the biggest cause for delaying your RN education?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 9

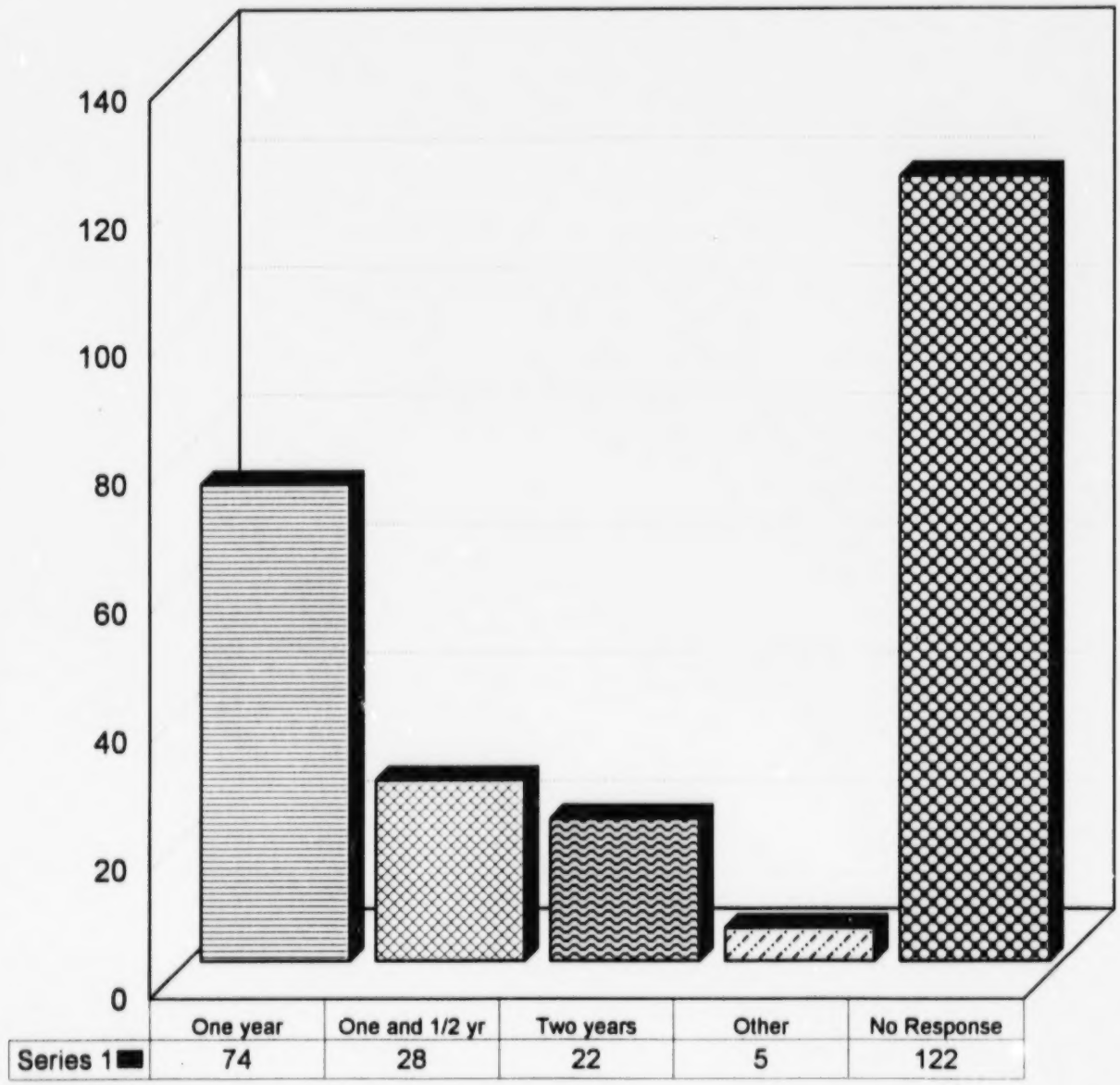
What time schedule would enable you to attend RN classes?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 10

What length of RN program do you prefer?

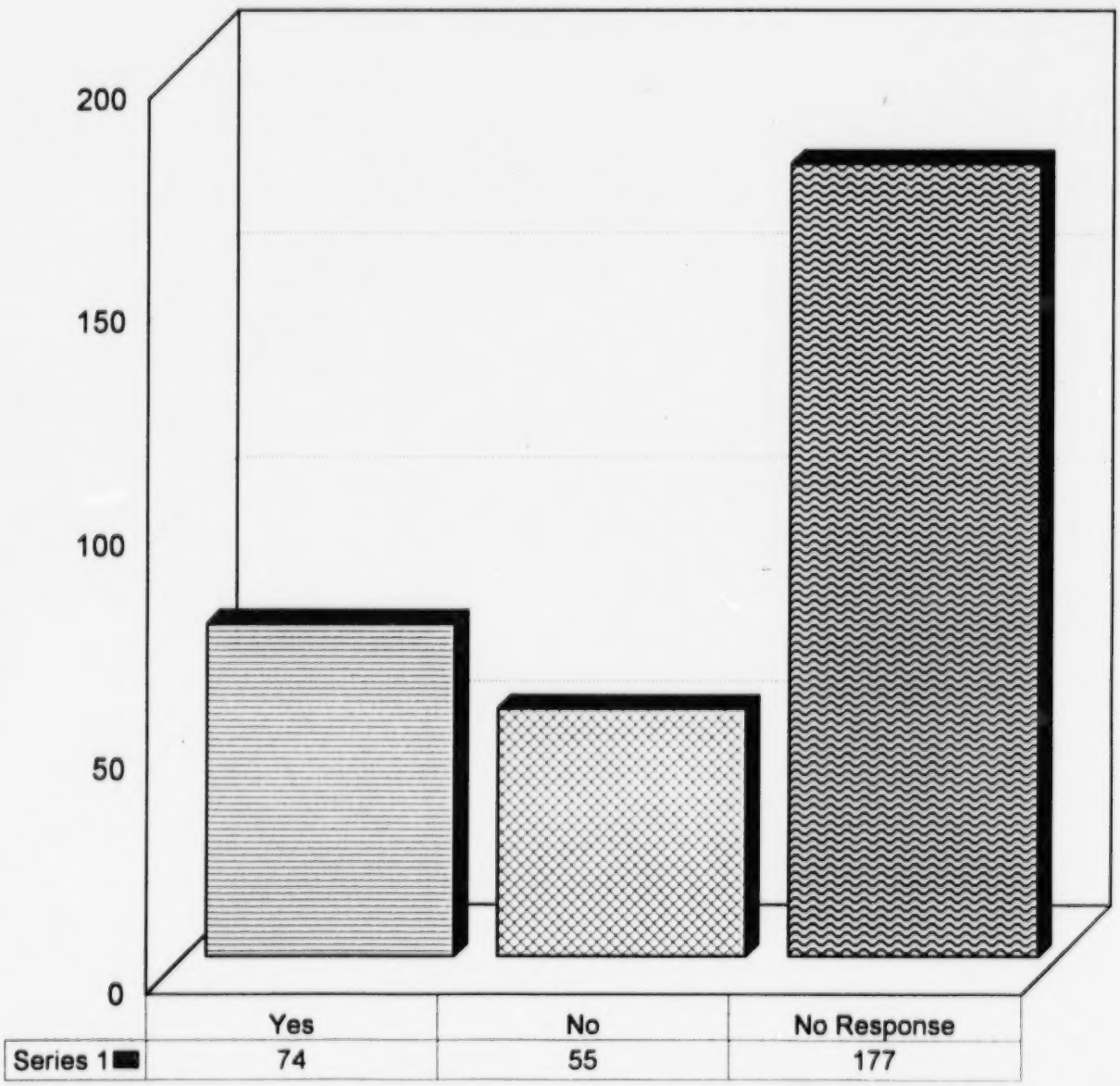


	One year	One and 1/2 yr	Two years	Other	No Response
Series 1	74	28	22	5	122

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 11

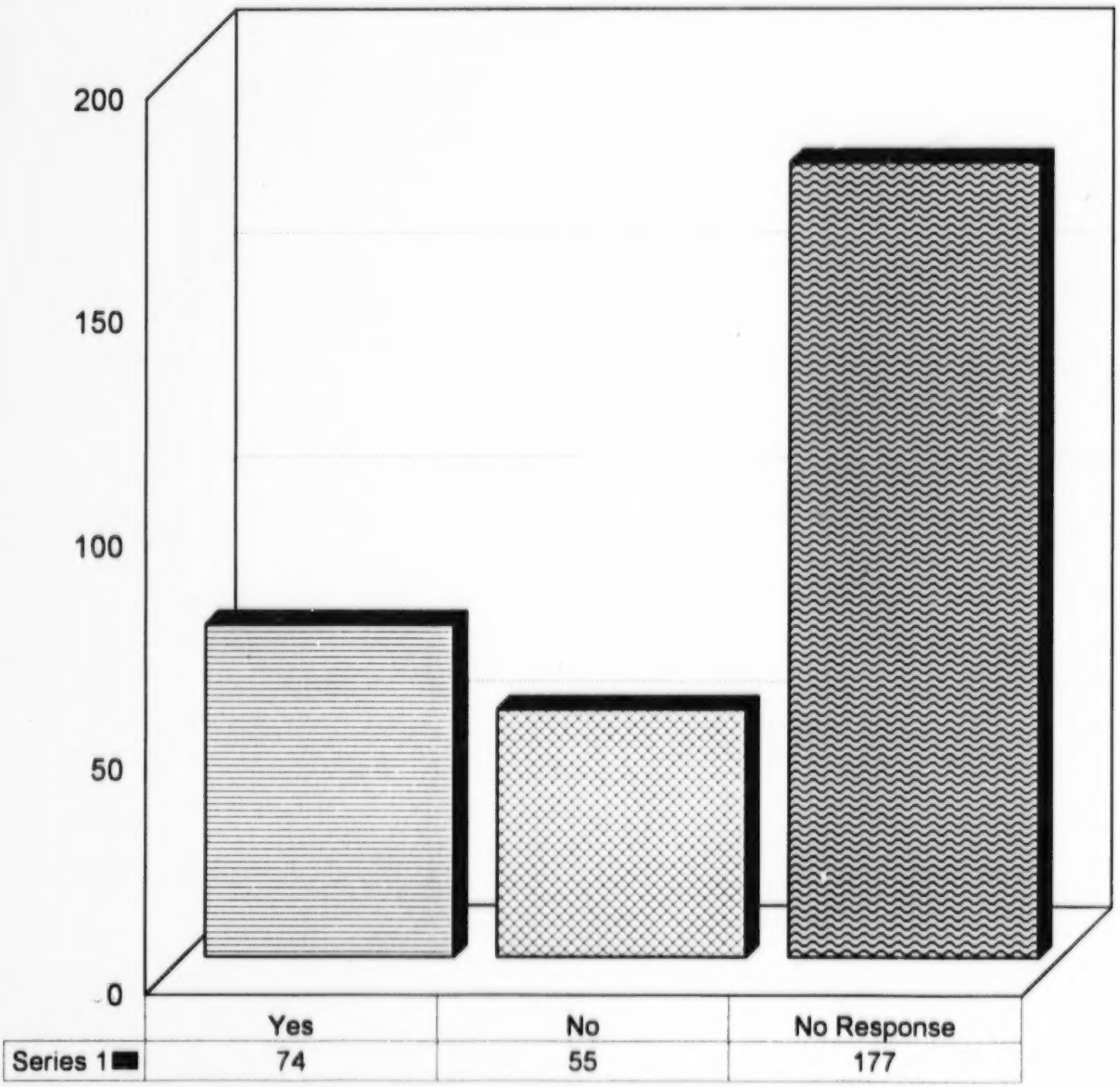
Have you sought out alternatives to a traditional RN education program?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 12

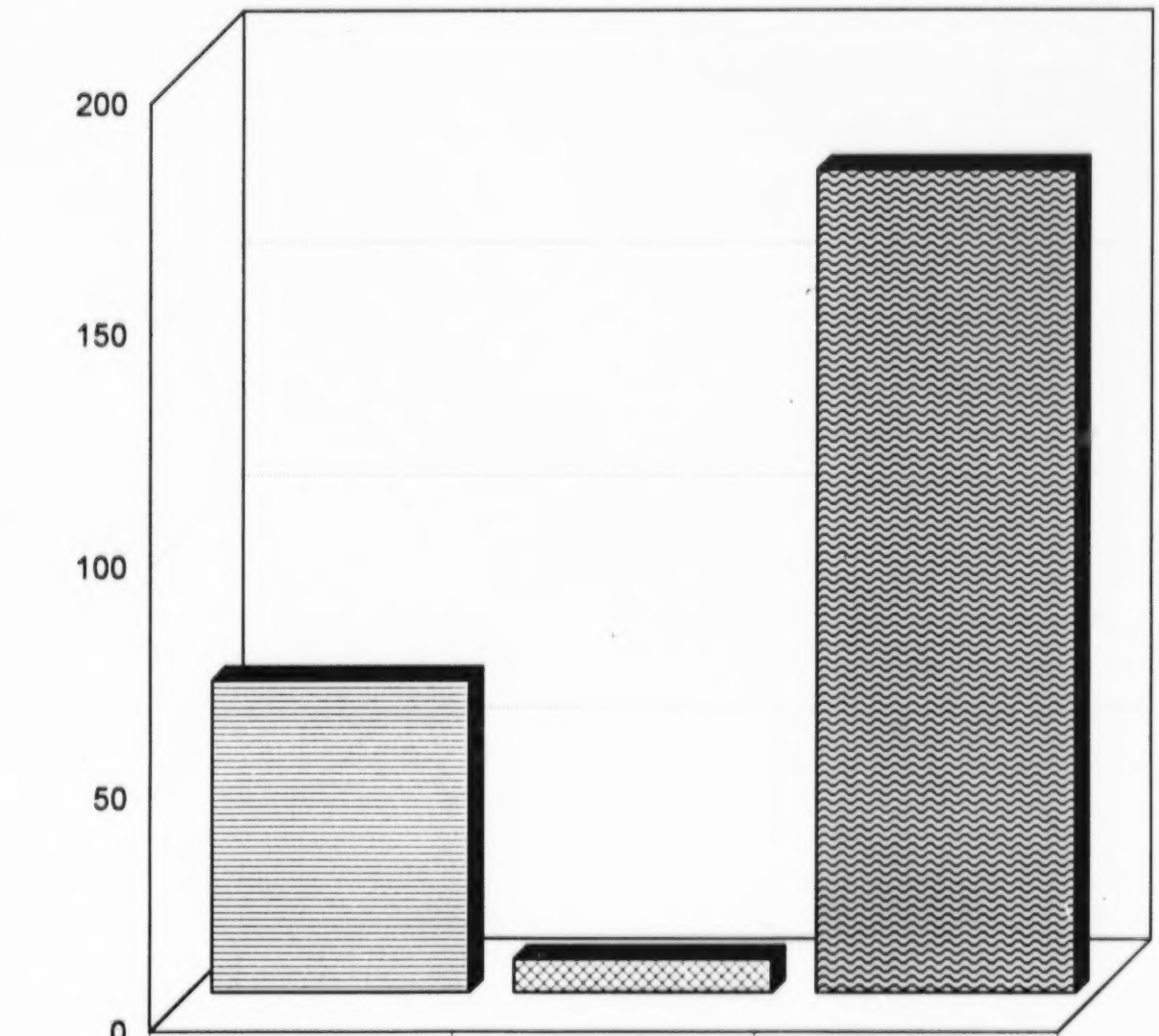
Did the cost attract you to alternative RN education?



LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 13

Did the convenient times instruction was offered attract you to alternative RN education?

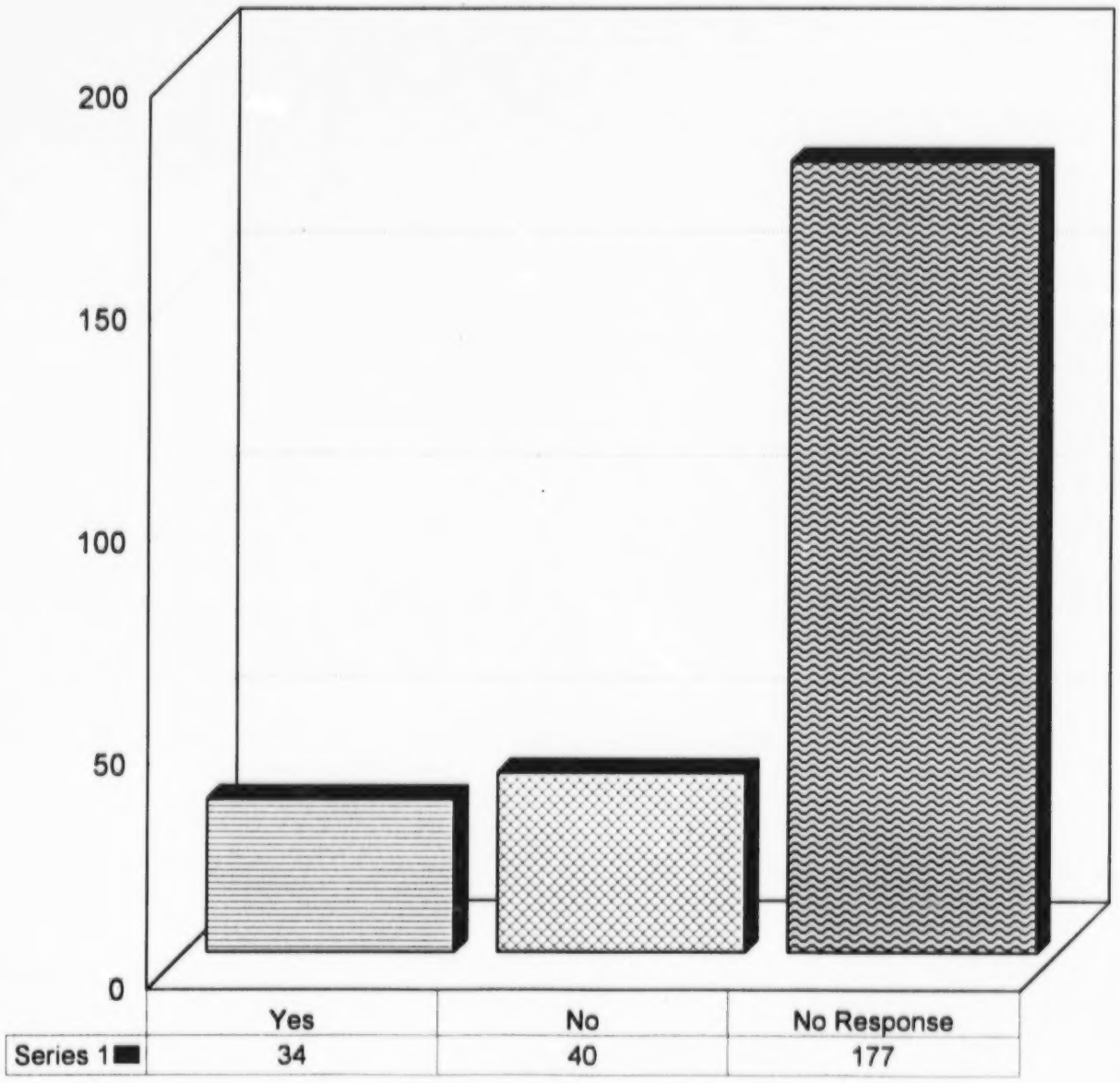


	Yes	No	No Response
Series 1	67	7	177

LPN TO RN TRANSITION PROGRAM SURVEY

QUESTION 14

Did the method of instruction attract you to alternative RN education?



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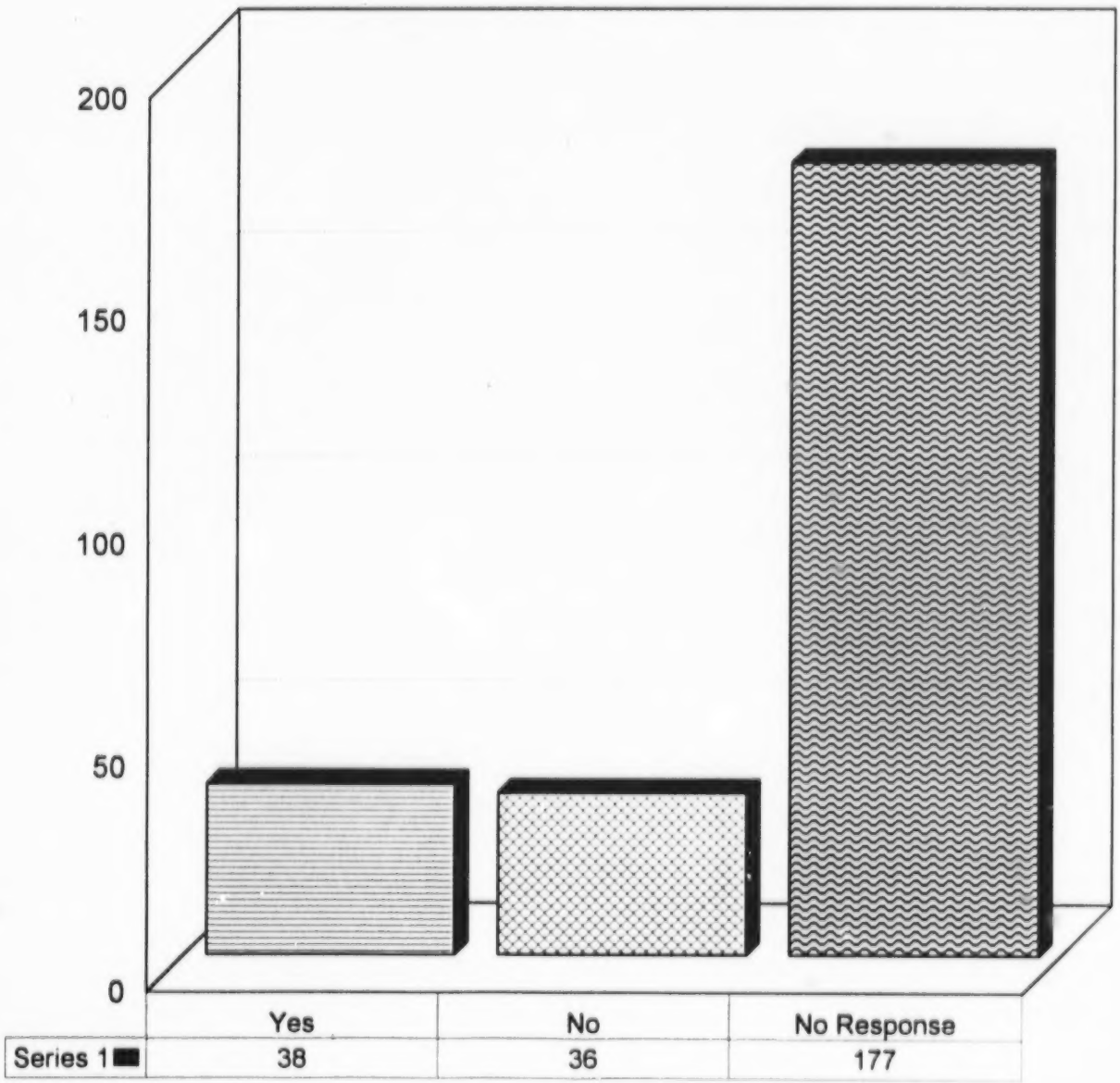
QUESTION 15

Did the less intimidating approach and more "user friendly" attract you to alternative RN education?



	Yes	No	No Response
Series 1	38	36	177

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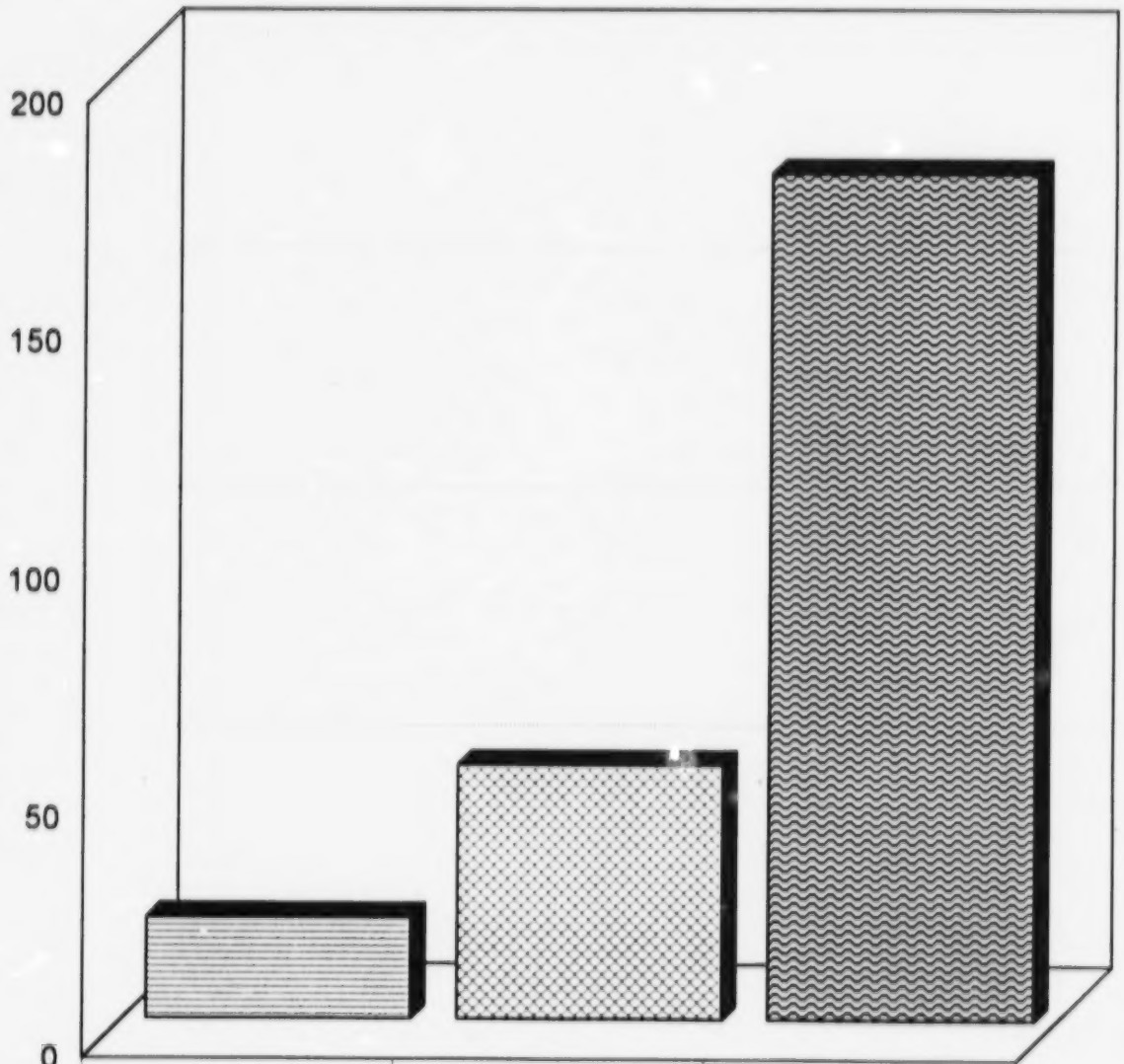
QUESTION 16

Did the other reasons attract you to alternative RN education?



	Yes	No	No Response
Series 1	21	53	177

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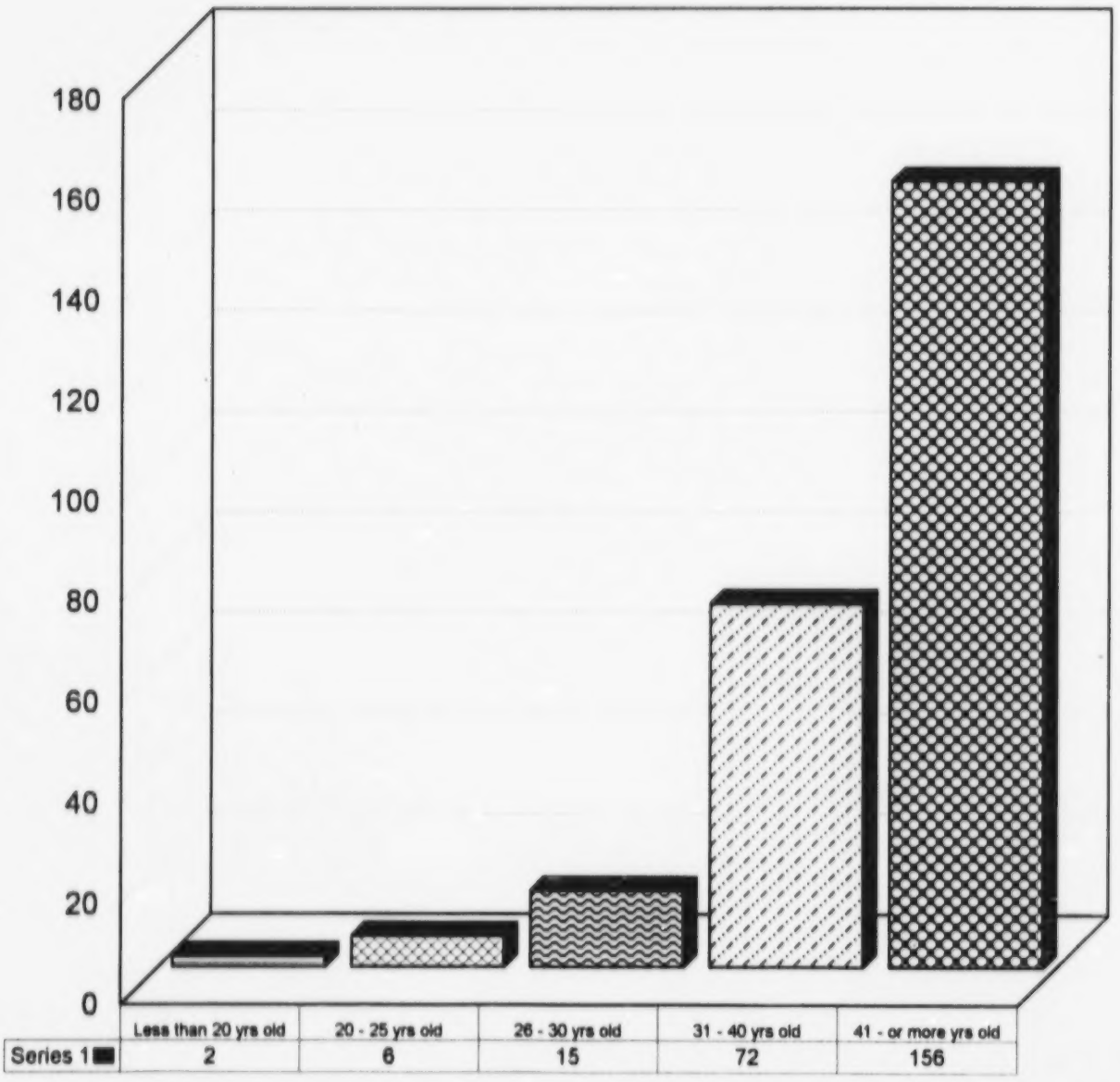
QUESTION 17

How old are you? (Age Range)



APPENDIX E

QUESTION 16

Question 16

Could be at home	4
Can go at own pace	4
Readily available. No waiting	2
Can work and study	2
Hard to maintain full-time job	1
Career advancement	1
Never had program when I wanted	1
No hand on training	1
Non-American. Hard to understand	1
Total convenience of academic study	1
Weren't as many prerequisites	1
No comment	2

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